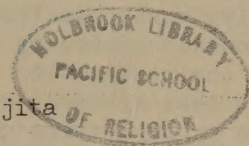


Japan Christian Activity News

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(mailed 6/17--sorry we are
late)



WITHIN THE SAME RING

The widely divergent views that characterize The United Church of Christ in Japan today were successfully brought together "in the same ring" in the conference held specifically for that purpose in Tozanso, Gotemba, June 8-10.

Among the 80 persons who came on special invitation or as representatives of their districts were those identified with former Holiness churches, the association to normalize the Kyodan, groups organized around Presbyterianism, congregationalism or Methodism, and groups of so-called radical pastors and students in Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka. Absent were former Moderator Kiyoshi Ii and Prof. Kazo Kitamori, both key figures in the struggles that the Kyodan has undergone in the past two years.

The conference, announced as being on the theme of "the position of the Confession of Faith in the Kyodan," was authorized by the standing committee and arranged by a special preparatory committee. The Rev. Kichiya Kikuchi was chairman of the preparatory committee and the steering committee responsible for the details of the conference. A three-man presidium composed of the Rev. Michinobu Tanaka, the Rev. Ichiro Kojima and Shiro Abe presided over the plenary sessions.

From the beginning of the conference, an issue that at times threatened to break up the meeting was that of parliamentary procedure. The opening session was postponed 45 minutes to allow representatives of Hyogo district to explain that they would not take part because they objected to a standing committee action that later became a central issue in the conference. A little later, radical groups in Osaka and Tokyo demanded observer privileges for certain persons not invited to participate. Moderator Mitsuho Yoshida personally asked conference members to approve the steering committee's recommendations that the request be met on the basis that in recent months mutual understanding had been growing through involving such persons in discussion. The approval was given although the practice of waiving rules in response to pressure from radical voices was sharply criticized by the Rev. Kyoji Ichikawa of Osaka and the Rev. Rinzo Washiyama of Tokyo.

FROM "C" TO "D"

Although the Confession of Faith was lifted up as the central issue of the conference, radical groups insisted that a prior concern was the action of standing committee members in the fall and winter of 1970-71, and questions from other participants indicated that they too felt there was ambiguity with regard to certain decisions of the standing committee.

The criticisms, leveled particularly by the Rev. Shigeo Kuwabara of Osaka and the Rev. Koichi Morita, representatives of the Nishi-Chugoku district, were aimed at the committee's abandonment of "Plan C" and the adoption of "Plan D"

(continued)

WITHIN THE SAME RING (continued)

in its place. Plan C had involved issuing a sokatsu (a statement of responsibility) for the present state of the Kyodan and convening the 17th General Assembly, postponed from fall, before the end of February, 1971. Plan D, which was adopted in February when it appeared that Plan C could not be achieved, involved the resignation of Moderator Ii and made no mention of a sokatsu. Critics claimed that standing committee members acted irresponsibly in submitting resignations or boycotting meetings rather than perfecting the draft of the sokatsu. They expressed suspicion that the move from C to D was an effort to avoid making a sokatsu.

Again and again Moderator Yoshida rose to explain details of the committee's decision to turn to Plan D after the activity of the committee had reached a stalemate. He told questioners that there was no intention of avoiding the making of a sokatsu. Standing Committee member Tamotsu Hasegawa declared that the real source of the trouble was the manner in which Moderator Ii had conducted the special General Assembly in 1970, responding to pressure from radical students and radical pastors. Another committee member, Mrs. Toshiko Hayashi, said it was pressure tactics of radicals that caused members to resign.

When the proposal came to move discussion from the plenary into smaller groups and to take up the Confession of Faith, radical voices objected but were overruled. Each of the five discussion groups reflected the mixed composition of the conference. In several cases persons found themselves facing, in their small circle, persons with whom they have been in open opposition. Others, however, were hearing for the first time the raw voices of controversy.

CONFESSION

As the attention of the conference turned to the Confession of Faith, theologians and seminary professors assumed a larger role. The Confession debate comes in part out of the specific history of the Kyodan. The Kyodan did not make a common Confession of Faith when it was formed in 1941. In 1954 a Confession along the lines of those of the Western churches to which the Kyodan is related was adopted. In 1967, a Confession of War Responsibility, relating particularly to the events of the war years and projected toward the future, was issued over the name of the then Moderator Masahisa Suzuki.

The main issues raised in discussion groups and brought out in the final plenary were:

- . discrepancies in the content of the present Confession and the views expressed by radical pastors
- . differences of interpretation among those who accept the present Confession
- . the question of the authority of the Confession in the Kyodan
- . the relationship between the Confession of Faith of 1954 and the Confession of War Responsibility
- . the need to make the Confession relevant to the present world situation
- . the question of whether a new Confession should be made

Participants generally felt that the conference exceeded their expectations and that it may stimulate this kind of discussion in districts and local churches. There are hopes that such dialogue is the key to the renewal of the Kyodan.

MUSHAKOJI PAX HIS BAGS FOR SODEPAX GENEVA

Prof. Kinhide Mushakoji, 41, director of the Institute of International Relations, Sophia University, Tokyo, has accepted a secretarial post in the Geneva headquarters of SODEPAX (Society for Society, Development and Peace). He will conduct research on the problem of Peace, a subject which has been a major concern in his writings and lectures, in Japanese and English, in recent years. He will be in Geneva for one year.

WITH ONE VOICE

by John Masaaki Nakajima

One thousand Christians prayed the Lord's Prayer as though with one voice in a Trinity Sunday celebration held in conjunction with the Church Music Festival at St. Mary's Cathedral in Tokyo June 6. A common translation of the Lord's Prayer had been prepared by the preparatory committee, composed of Roman Catholics and Protestants.

The most significant fact was that, for the first time in the four-year history of the Festival, the four participating churches--Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican and The United Church--united in celebrating Lord's Day worship together. The Festival's having been initiated by persons interested in church music, there was some hesitancy in the three foregoing festivals, to go into the realm of corporate worship together, and a tendency to evade theological issues.

This time, however, the time was ripe. Using the Trinity Sunday lessons of The United Church (Kyodan), the Festival took the form of a regular worship service, all essential elements except the celebration of the Eucharist being observed.

Except for the Agnus Dei of Bach's Mass in B Minor, most of the music sung by the eighty member choir was in the form of liturgical antiphonal chants. For that reason, perhaps the musical content did not fully satisfy the appetites of those who came expecting a "musical" performance, although the music was all superbly performed. Of special note were the deep heart-rending sole of first-rank alto Yonako Nagano, the brass ensemble opening by four Lutheran missionaries, the splendid organ accompaniment, and the able directorships of Koten Okuda and Tsugutoshi Aragaki.

Ecumenically and liturgically speaking, the event was monumental. Although many experimental joint worships have taken place before in small groups in Japan, this was the first time in the history of Japanese Christianity that such an ecumenical service attracted one thousand people. There was wide appreciation for the labors and continued discussions on the part of the committee members that finally brought forth agreement on all elements in this ecumenical service. Worshippers would have been helped by the inclusion in the program of some explanation of the sources of the various liturgical forms.

It is to be hoped that this committee will boldly extend an invitation to participate to as many branches of Christianity as possible.

ALINSKY--PROVOCATIVE

"Make trouble and more trouble," famous American community organizer Saul Alinsky urged Japanese at a "meeting with Mr. Alinsky" sponsored by the NCC June 7 in Tokyo. Alinsky expressed his interest in each of the forty-five persons present and in what each is doing, then talked of the principles of his movement and his experiences in the United States. "People need organization in order to gain power," he stressed, proceeding to give some dramatic examples of how one person's needs must be translated into an active force if it is to affect those in positions of authority.

SHUKYO-HOJIN FOR BAPTISTS

The 14th Convention of the Japan Baptist Union was held from June 6-9 at Yugawara. About one hundred delegates from forty churches and preaching places attended. The chief issue was incorporation of JBU; namely, making the JBU a shukyo-hojin (religious juridical person).

This act of incorporation means a special tax exemption amounting to about \$300,000 this year and \$60,000 annually. But this legality caused apprehension among the young people over possible State control. They opposed this bill, but the action passed after five hours' debate.

The other important issue was "how to train young people to be ministers in the absence of a proper Baptist institution." Kanto Gakuin Seminary in Yokohama is still not back to normal after trouble last year. The Convention decided to send ministerial candidates to other seminaries that are in operation, and to Kanto Gakuin if it opens its doors again to newcomers. A committee was formed to be responsible for sending students to appropriate schools as well as to train them following graduation to be Baptist leaders. This finishing process will be done in a group retreat or in local churches under the personal supervision of experienced ministers.

On the third issue before the Convention, renewal of the nature of the Convention itself, no clear conclusion was reached.

BRIDGE OVER THE TROUBLED WATERS by T. Kusunoki, NCC Division of Service

"Who am I?"--"Who can we be, in the years of the Seventies?"

To face these radical questions in live situations is the main concern of members of cross-Pacific teams this summer: fifteen youth from Texas coming to Japan, five youth going to the United States. Along the idea of exchanging followers of Jesus Christ in order to establish global Christian identity in the chaotic twentieth century, the NCC has decided to take its share of responsibility for enabling Christians to overcome the crisis of identity that now pierces the churches in Japan.

The Fanniel Team of the summer of '70, consisting of five Blacks from Chicago, left after challenging many Japanese Christians and other concerned people, both lay and clergy. The team's presence in Japanese communities as well as their "rapups" with people were also crucial in creating a first step toward eliminating "mistrust and distrust" and the "illusions" common to persons of both countries. The philosophy behind the sending and receiving of teams this summer derives from NCC's responses to challenges of the Fanniel and other teams over the years. This year both teams are sponsored by the NCC Division of Service and the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

The Texas team will arrive in Japan July 3, proceeding July 12 to Okinawa. Where it will be hosted by the Division of Youth of the Okinawa Christian Council. From July 26 to August 9 it will visit Kagoshima, Kokura, Hiroshima and Osaka, and Aug. 16-27 will be at the International Work Camp at Okunakayama. Young Japanese men and women are urged to participate in the concerns of Work-Camp with the Texans. Applications are available from the Division of Service.

The Minority Issues Team, counterpart of the Texas team, will leave for the United States July 2. The team's will stay for one month in Chicago living in Black and Spanish-speaking communities. The second month will be spent in Newark, N. J., with visits to churches and tours of community projects.

Members of the Minority Issue Team are: Rev. Hyung Kyu Hong (leader), Chaplain, Ohmi-kyodaisha High School; Shigeru Honda, Graduate Meiji Gakuin University, majored in urban and mass sociology; Baek Woon Choi, Student at Seinan-Gakuin University; Miss Keiko Doi, Graduate, Notre Dame Seishin, Women's University.

SPECIAL REPORT by the Rev. Masanao Fujita, Koishikawa Hakusan Church and professor, Japan Biblical Seminary

When a number of Korean and Japanese leaders were invited to the Asia-South Pacific Congress on Evangelism in Singapore in 1968, several persons from both countries gathered together between meetings and exchanged frank opinions regarding relationships between the two countries. At that time Japanese delegates expressed their sincere sorrow over what Japan had done to the Koreans in the past and it was decided to meet again for a closer talk.

Consequently fifteen Korean evangelical leaders were invited to Tokyo last year and we had a very fruitful conference. This time sixteen Japanese delegates and five observers were invited to Seoul and we met from June 2-6.

We were very sorry to be informed upon arrival in Korea that a group of Japanese Christians visiting Korea had made some ill reports about us in Korean newspapers. Their main purpose was to tell the Koreans that there were among us eleven who belonged to The United Church of Christ in Japan and therefore were related to NCC and consequently to WCC, which, in their opinion, consisted of liberal and pro-communist Christians, and that it would be disadvantageous to the Korean Church to hold a meeting with them.

Readers may know of the situation in Korean churches, and this kind of misinformation greatly shocked some of those who belong to some part of the Presbyterian Church there. They asked us to make a statement to the effect that we had nothing to do with WCC. We understand the misgivings on the part of those who are rather conservative in their faith but, at the same time, we cannot be so narrow-minded as to disagree with the WCC. This much, however, we should like to make clear on this occasion: that we consider it important not to be too liberal in our faith, either.

Through these experiences we were convinced once again that the most urgent matter at present is to devote ourselves completely to the deep understanding of the Gospel and to the preaching of it. We should stand firmly on the Biblical faith and preach the Gospel upon this conviction not only in Japan but all over the world.

We also talked about future possibilities for holding the third and even wider-scale conferences on evangelism, to which we will look forward with much eagerness in the Lord.

We sincerely appreciate the warm welcome the Korean Church extended to us. We could really talk freely with warm and open hearts in an understanding spirit under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I really believe we can become most faithful comrades for one another led by the Spirit of God. I pray that this kind of friendly fellowship will be created in all churches of every denomination.

Official delegates from The United Church of Christ in Japan were: the Revs. Noboru Hara; Seiichi Honda; Shunzo Miyauchi, Japan Bible Society; Shimao Nakaji; Tosaji Obara; Dr. Norinaga Moriyama, layman, Mrs. Izumi Masuda, evangelist. The Rev. Masanao Fujita, Koishikawa Hakusan Church, headed the group.

Delegates from non-Kyodan denominations were: Dr. Cho Ki Sun, Korean Church; Bishop Tsunenori Takase, Anglican Episcopal Church of Japan; the Revs. Shigeo Shinone, Church of Christ; Satoshi Moriyama, Japan Church of Jesus Christ; Kinzaburo Ikemoto, Kirisuto Kyodai Dan; Kiyonao Kobayashi, Kirisuto Kyodai Dan; Messrs. Atsushi Takei, Layman's Association and the Evangelical Alliance Mission; Yasushi Saoshiro, Japan Christian Layman's Association; Eichi Ito, The Revs. Masayoshi Morikawa and Eiji Seki were observers.

WSCF EXECUTIVE TO MEET IN JAPAN IN JULY

The Executive Committee of the World Student Christian Federation will meet July 2-10 at the YMCA Tozanso Center, Gotemba. Participants will include about twenty voting members from all of the WSCF's six regions and about an equal number of consultants and fraternal guests. The WSCF chairman, Dr. Richard Shaull, of Princeton Theological Seminary, is expected to chair the meeting.

According to the WSCF General Secretary, the Rev. Risto Lehtonen, much time will be given to reporting on and evaluating the programs and functions of the Geneva headquarters and of the six regional offices. Mr. Moenkyu Kang is co-ordinator of the WSCF Asia Office which, with the Japan Student Christian Movement, will host this meeting.

Discussions will also focus on the basic aims and basis of the Federation, fully reflecting the theological agonizing of today's world and on the national constituencies and international role of the Federation. These issues are being hotly debated as the WSCF plans for its General Assembly, tentatively scheduled for January 1972 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

This will be the first major meeting of the WSCF as a world body to be held in Asia since the General Committee met in Peking in 1922. At that time the world was trying to recover from its first major world war, and China itself was at the peak of its Renaissance Movement. Despite painful conflicts and polarization, the WSCF affirmed then its aim "To bring students of all countries into mutual understanding and sympathy, to lead them to realize that the principles of Jesus Christ should rule in international relationships, and to endeavor by so doing to draw the nations together." The need today is not wholly different from then.

INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENTS

The Rev. In Ha Lee, General Secretary, Korean Christian Church in Japan

June 1 - 8 United States: NCCC-USA

June 8 - 30 Canada: Canadian Presbyterian Church

Dr. Akihiko Shinkai, Chairman, Japan Christian Medical Association

June 9 - 15 Rome: WCC Christian Medical Commission Executive Committee

The Rev. Toshihiro Takami, Associate Director, NCC Div. of Service

June 16 - 19 Geneva: WCC DICARWS

The Rev. John Nakajima, General Secretary, NCC

June 21 - 27 United States: UPC-USA COEMAR, Interchurch Center; UCC-USA

June 28 - July 7 Geneva: World Consultation of Christian Councils

Dr. Takaaki Aikawa, Vice-chairman, NCC

June 28 - July 7 Geneva: World Consultation of Christian Councils

Mr. Matthew Ogawa, Associate General Secy., East Asia Christian Conference

June 28 - July 7 Geneva: World Consultation of Christian Councils

Miss Teruko Mizutani, Acting Executive Secretary, NCC Division of Education

July 7 - 14 Mexico City: WCCE Encounter Group

July 15 - 21 Lima, Peru: WCCE Gathered World Assembly

The Rev. Yoshikazu Miura, NCC Division of Education

July 7 - 14 Guatemala: WCCE Encounter Group

July 14 - 21 Lima, Peru: WCCE Gathered World Assembly

Mr. Koichi Oshima, NCC Division of Education

July 7 - Buenos Aires: WCCE Encounter Group

July 14 - 21 Lima, Peru: WCCE Gathered World Assembly